

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 220945Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8375

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 15590

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS: JCRC NKP THAILAND; USDEL FPJMT SAIGON;
USDAO SAIGON; SECDEF WASHDC.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, VS, CB

SUBJECT: AMERICAN DEFECTOR IN CAMBODIA

REF: STATE 254498

1. WE HAVE STUDIED (AND DISCUSSED WITH JCRC-NKP-THAILAND) PROPOS-
AL TO ATTEMPT TO MAKE CONTACT WITH U.S. ARMY DEFECTOR MC KINLEY
NOLAN CONTAINED REFTEL. BEFORE TAKING STEPS WHICH MIGHT PRODUCE
UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR NOLAN, AND U.S. MILITARY OR CIVILAIN
PERSONNEL WHO MAY BE IN KC CAPTIVITY, WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH
THE DEPARTMENT THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERED VIEWS OF THE CIVILIAN AND
MILITARY COMPONENTS OF THIS MISSION.

2. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT, AS WAS THE CASE IN VIETNAM AND
LAOS, THE RELEASE BY THE KC OF CAPTURED U.S. MILITARY AND CIVILIAN
PERSONNEL (INCLUDING JOURNALISTS) IS MOST LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED
ONLY AS PART OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE KHMER CONFLICT.
WHILE WE WISH TO BE EVER ALERT TO ANY PROMISING OPPORTUNITY WHICH
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MIGHT ARISE PRIOR TO THAT TIME, WE DO NOT CONSIDER THE NOLAN CASE

A PROMISING ONE.

3. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, WE DO NOT HAVE ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE KC AT THE PRESENT TIME. THE JAPANESE EMBASSY CLAIMS TO HAVE MADE UNSPECIFIED CONTACT WITH THE KC REGARDING TWO MISSING JAPANESE JOURNALISTS, BUT NO RESULTS HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING IN MANY MONTHS. THE ICRC HAS TOLD US ABOUT CONTACTS WHICH IT HAS HAD IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA WITH AGENTS OF THE OTHER SIDE, BUT THESE, ALSO, HAVE ACHIEVED NO RESULTS TO DATE FOR THE ICRC. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, FURTHERMORE, NO OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN PHNOM PENH HAS DEVELOPED ANY CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE OTHER SIDE.

4. IN OUR JUDGEMENT, THE MERE FACT THAT MORE INFORMATION HAS FILTERED THROUGH FROM THE KC-CONTROLLED ZONE ABOUT NOLAN IS NOT, IN ITSELF, AN ARGUMENT FOR ATTEMPTING TO MAKE CONTACT WITH HIM, ESPECIALLY IF SUCH AN EFFORT WERE TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE NOT ONLY FOR HIM, BUT FOR OTHER CAPTURED U.S. PERSONNEL AS WELL. WE HAVE LEARNED MORE ABOUT NOLAN BECAUSE, AS A U.S. MILITARY DEFECTOR, HE HAS CLEARLY NOT BEEN UNDER CLOSE KC SECURITY WRAPS. UNLIKE OTHER CAPTURED U.S. PERSONNEL WHO MAY BE HIDDEN AND UNDER TIGHT SECURITY IN KC PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMPS, NOLAN APPARENTLY HAS ENJOYED REASONABLE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. BECAUSE HE HAS THEREFORE BEEN MORE VISIBLE WITHIN THE KC ZONE, WE HAVE LEARNED MORE ABOUT HIM THROUGH RALLIER INTERROGATIONS. WHETHER HIS RELATIVE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WOULD HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO MAKE HIS WAY TO THE GKR SIDE -- IF HE HAD, INDEED, WISHED TO DO SO -- IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW. WE NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT IN NOVEMBER 1973 HE REPORTEDLY "WALKED AWAY" FROM HIS VC/NVA CAPTORS WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY.

5. OUR PRIMARY CONCERN ABOUT THE PROPOSAL DESCRIBED REFTTEL IS OUR FEAR THAT ANY EFFORT TO CONTACT NOLAN AT THIS TIME MIGHT RESULT IN INCREASED KC CONTROLS OVER HIM, INCLUDING POSSIBLE IMPRISONMENT. OUR EFFORT MIGHT RAISE SUSPICIONS AMONG THE KC THAT HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAKE SOME CLANDESTINE CONTACT WITH THIS SIDE. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE EFFORT WOULD SIGNAL TO THE OTHER SIDE THE FACT THAT WE ARE MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT HIM AND HIS WHEREABOUTS THAN THEY REALIZED OR WISHED WERE THE CASE.

6. MORE IMPORTANT, WE ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT THE KC MIGHT
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ERRONEOUSLY DRAW THE SAME CONCLUSION ABOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHEREABOUTS OF U.S. MILITARY AND CIVILIAN POW'S THEY MAY BE HOLDING. THIS, IN TURN, COULD VERY WELL RESULT IN RELOCATION OF THE PRISONERS, INCREASED SECURITY CONTROLS AND GREATER DEPRIVATION, IN GENERAL. IN SUM, WE DO NOT CONSIDER THAT ANY BUT THE MOST PROMISING EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE ON BEHALF OF A DEFECTOR IF THERE IS ANY REPEAT ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD CAUSE INCREASED PERSONAL DEPRIVATION TO BONAFIDE U.S. MILITARY AND CIVILIAN POW'S.

7. GIVEN THE APPARENT LACK OF SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON THE PART OF MOSCOW WITH THE KC AT THE PRESENT TIME, WE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ANY CAPABILITY FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION, EVEN IF THEY WERE SO INCLINED.

8. WE HAVE NO RECENT REPORTS ABOUT MISSING AMERICAN JOURNALISTS OR U.S. ARMY DESERTER LARRY HUMPHREY AND U.S. CIVILIAN CLYDE MCKAY, HIJACKERS OF THE SS COLUMBIA EAGLE. WE ARE CONTINUING TO SEEK INFORMATION ABOUT THEM AS WELL AS ALL OTHER MISSING U.S. PERSONNEL THROUGH RALLIER, POW AND REFUGEE INTERROGATIONS.

DEAN

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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